

BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

April 23, 1963

SUBJECT: Possible renewal of Exile Raids on Cuba

QUESTION: Can you comment on published reports suggesting that now that the American prisoners have been released, the US Government may "unleash" the exiles and tacitly permit a renewal of military raids on Cuba?

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT:

Just prior to Monday's release of the 21 American prisoners in Cuba, Reston hinted pointedly in the Sunday New York Times that the US Government continues to work quietly with responsible Cuban exiles to promote underground activity against the Castro regime. This was followed Monday by questions from several newspapermen raising the possibility that now with the Americans freed, the US may adopt a more aggressive anti-Castro stance in its policies. The only product of these inquiries was Kurzman's story in the Tuesday Washington Post indicating we would relax controls on exile raiders. Quoting unspecified officials, Kurzman reported that "there was a connection between the presence of the Americans (the prisoners) in Cuba and the severe crackdown on exile raiding activities." This line of speculation may be expected to continue as other writers pick up the theme.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY:

The position of the Government has been stated repeatedly and should be clear to all. We oppose these highly publicized pinprick raids launched from US territory in violation of US laws which fail in any effective way to loosen Castro's grip on Cuba.